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To my dear Sister Annie
with love from.

Addie

Spillupelt



WALKS IN PARADISE

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Where He Met with Jesus," "Words of Life," etc.



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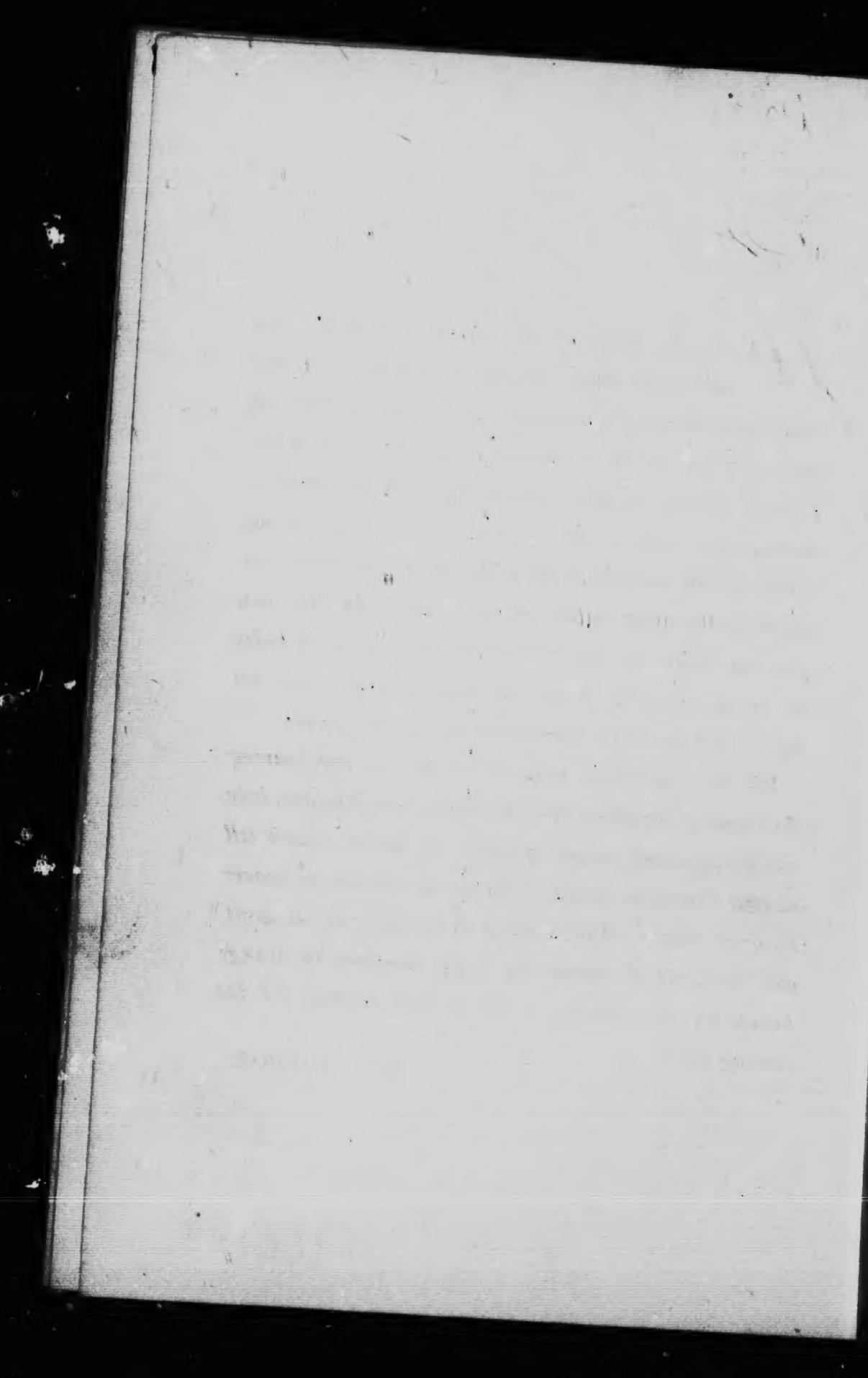
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HERE the range of our vision is limited. We see eternal things through a glass darkly; they float by in obscured grandeur. It is only by faith we can catch but dimly a glimpse of our heavenly home. Strange glories at times struggle through the clouds of humanity to urge us not to grow weary in well-doing. Amid doubts and fears we often travel, straining our eyes to get a sight of the "Good Land." In His own time our Heavenly Father will lift the veil which hides the eternal realities from our view, and we shall not only behold, but enjoy, the inheritance of His people.

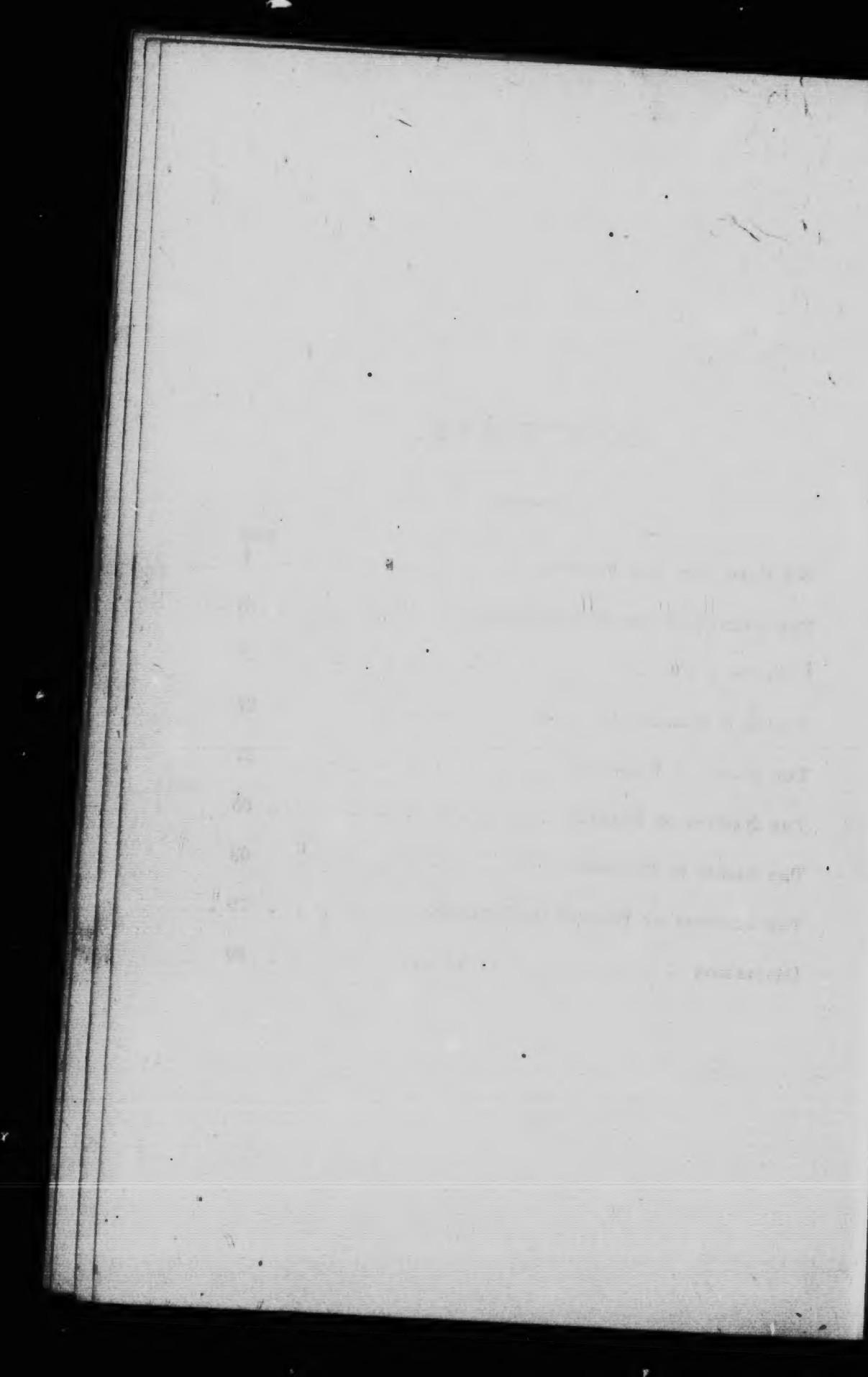
We have, at times, indications that we are nearing the Land of the Blest. The passage of swift wings, holy whisperings and sacred melodies are heard, which tell us that Paradise cannot be far away. It may be nearer than we expect. With some of us the night is far spent, and the light of everlasting day is breaking in strange beauty on the horizon. Let us keep looking for the coming morn.

THE AUTHOR.



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WE PART, BUT NOT FOREVER.

"Pure fields of heavenly light—in you
There is no parting, no adieu."

WHY our loved ones should unfold their beauties for awhile, and then wither and die, is a problem we must leave for the Higher Life to solve. We had a lovely child, whom we tenderly nursed and cared for, when He who gave him to us took him to Himself. In our weary watchings our hearts were wrung with sorrow as we saw him fade away. The pale messenger warned us of his approach, but he came, as he always does, sooner than we expected. We felt his presence as he left his image on the little face, and the closed eye-lids and quivering limbs told us that the spirit had fled. We could scarcely realize that the sleep in which he had fallen was the sleep of death. Bending over him, we kissed his still warm forehead and toyed with his silken hair, as we were

want to do when he laid his weary head to rest upon our breast, like the nestling under the wing of the mother-bird. We wooed him to speak to us but once more, but his lips parted not, and the grave fact came stealing over us again that he was dead. We turned aside to weep, and said bitter things of Him who had taken one of the lambs from our flock. The evening shadows gathered, and words were spoken in whispers. The joyous laugh of children in the street made our loss feel keener. Unseen, we stole into the room where the body of our child lay shrouded for the grave, and kneeling by the little cot we voiced the anguish of our soul, unheard save by the angel-watchers in the room, then laid down our weary heads to rest. The holy visions of that night we never can forget. We dreamed we were sitting on the banks of a river in the loneliness of night, when suddenly a gleam of light shone across the water, and a child-like form, with folded wings and clad in white, across the river came. We recognized the loved one as our dear beautiful boy. "Mamma," said he, "I've come to wreath your faded cheeks once more with smiles." We clasped him in our arms, and pressed his lips to ours; while down our cheeks the tears were falling fast. He took us by the

hand, and we together the river crossed ; the silvery waves our feet scarcely ever touched, and we heard the sweetest music, as of cherub-voices floating in air. We passed through groves of olives, palms and flowers, lovely vales, ambrosial bowers, in which were glittering forms, harping on golden harps, then along the shores of slumbering lakes, reflecting in their crystal depths the stars of heavenly light. Everywhere the land blushed with enchanting beauty. The mansions were of diamond and amethyst; the banks of the streams rose-crowned, and breathed the sweetest odours. The people we met were fairer than the sons and daughters of a king. We saw groups of little children among the evergreens and flowers; in their hands were harps of gold, and crowns sparkling on their brows. Their robes were like those of gossamer, and white as driven snow, and near them were other shining ones hymning songs of praise. We turned to our child and said, "What is this beautiful land you have brought us to, so lovely and so bright?" "It is Paradise, dear mamma,—the inheritance of the saints. Do not grieve again for me, I am so happy here." "No, no, my child, we will not, we cannot sorrow more; your home is infinitely more lovely than the one you had before. But when you left us our hearts were crushed with grief,

and we wept and sighed, but could not find relief." A heavenly smile played on his face as we spoke these words to him. "When you deck my grave with flowers, mamma, let drop no loving tear, but think of me as your angel-boy, as you have seen me here, and when you come to the river brink, may-be I'll be the messenger to lead you safely here." He threw his arms around our neck, and kissed a loved adieu, and the rapture of that moment we feel even now. No more we murmur at our lot, but are waiting for the call that shall take us to our darling boy, in his beautiful, happy home.

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WALKS IN PARADISE.



WALKS IN PARADISE.

THE AVENUE TO THE KING'S GARDEN.

"In some hour of solemn jubilee
The massy gates of Paradise are thrown
Wide open, and forth come, in fragments wild,
Sweet echoes of unearthly melodies,
And odours snatched from beds of amaranth,
And they that from the crystal river of life
Spring up on freshened wing, ambrosial gales!
The favoured good man in his lonely walks
Perceives them, and his silent spirit drinks
Strange bliss, which he shall recognize as heaven."

BEAUTIFUL shade-trees, arched with luxuriant and fadeless foliage, and flowers more glorious than was ever Sharon's rose, form the avenue leading to the gates of Paradise, where the sons and daughters of God are waiting for admission. Though the path leads through the river of death, the waters

are divided, and stand like walls of crystal on either side, so as to form no barrier to the pilgrim on his way thither.

John Bunyan's beautiful description of the "land of Beulah" is not all imaginary. It is as true in its theology as it is beautiful in its poetry. It represents the blessed time in which saints tarry on the borders of the good land, waiting for the chariot of Israel. Dr. Payson, when dying, said: "When I read Bunyan's description of the 'land of Beulah,' I used to doubt whether there was such a place, but my own experience has convinced me of it, and it transcends all my previous conceptions. I cannot find words to express my happiness." A few days before he died he wrote a letter to his beloved sister, in which he says:

"**MY DEAR SISTER,**—If I were to use the figurative language of John Bunyan, I would date this letter from the 'land of Beulah,' for here it is light by day and by night. My sins are all gone. I seem to float in the sunlight of Deity. The river of death, which seemed so wide, is narrowed to a rill, that I can step over at a single stride. For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain.

"Yours in Jesus,

"EDWARD PAYSON."

The Rev. Dr. Winter Hamilton, as he stood by the side of his dying friend Eby, said: "Here lies my friend, he hastens to depart. Death is upon him—the change is well-nigh come. How little intervenes between his present humiliation and his awaiting glories. I tremble to think what, in an instant, he must be. How unlike all he was, how extreme all he is. I bend over thee and mark thy wasted, pallid form. I look up, and there is above me an angel's form. I stoop to thee, and catch thy gasping whisper. I listen, and there floats around me a seraph's song. I take thy hand, tremulous and cold, it is waving to me from yonder skies. I wipe thy brow, damp and furrowed, it is enwreathed with the garland of victory. I slake thy lip, bloodless and parched; it is drinking at the living fountain—the overflowing springs of heaven." All God's people have not the same ecstatic feelings and divine manifestations as Payson in their dying moments. The unutterable bliss of such an hour can only be enjoyed by those who live a life of holiness. What more fitting emblems of the dying Christian is there than a sunset on a beautiful summer's eve? The heavens cloudless, everything hushed, and the hill-tops tipped with amber and gold. But infinitely more sublime is the departure of a Christian happy in God—"Diving in brighter day to rise." The

city of "Many Mansions" is full in view—a city whose streets are paved with gold, and palace walls blushing with jasper, and all ablaze with the hues of a thousand precious stones. Thrones tower around, on which are seated kings and priests and elders waving palms and wearing crowns of light. High choirs of angels, whose white wings are flashing in the gleams of Deity, are pouring out such songs of harmony and sweetness as ear hath never heard. The uprising spirit, enraptured with the sight, and wishing for swifter pinions, cries:

"Lord, lend your wings, I mount, I fly,
'O grave! where is thy victory?
O death! where is thy sting!"

Oh, what rapture thrills the soul as it sweeps through the shining portals!

How delightful will be our first walk in Paradise! What scenes of beauty will rise before us! Flowers bright as stars, and tremulous as a tear. Fruits, rich and gushing, cluster in a thousand groves; lakes sparkle in the radiance, and fountains of living waters fling up into the balmy air myriads of glittering drops; and yet with all this brightness and cloudless noon, "the sun doth not light on them nor any heat, they need no candle, neither light of the sun." No sun, and yet such dazzling glory! No, what orb has been,

flung into the sky that could diffuse such light ! Beings, robed in white, as they pass, salute the newly-arrived saint with smiles of welcome ; and seraphs, as they glide by on glittering wings, point to higher thrones of bliss.

What a hallowed moment that will be when we see the King in His beauty, and inherit the land that now appears afar off. O Christian, ponder over these grand realities, and tell the dull earth that it is unworthy of thy love. Let night cover the gemmed vanities between thee and the Mount of God. Though thy life be as a vapour which appeareth for a little while, thy inner life is hid with Christ in God. Thou shalt be enabled to rejoice in the very presence of the King of terrors. Thou hast a charm against his terrors, and an antidote against his sting. Thou hast a lamp that shall light up the valley of death, and drive back the shadows, and shall shine on the plumes of the hearse which carries thy body to the tomb. When thou passest through the river, the ark of the covenant shall go before thee and divide the waves, and enable thee to pass through. Thou shalt be welcomed to a state of felicity, such as mortal eye has never seen, feel a fulness of joy the heart of man cannot conceive, and receive a blessing as lasting as it is complete. Thou shalt be free from sin, and delivered from suf-

fering. No more tossed with tempest, harassed with fear, vexed with care, chained by infirmities, lacerated with inward wounds, and shadowed with guilt. There is a rich fruition in store for thee. It is thronged with kindred spirits. It is not a vision that shall vanish, but is vivified with glorious realities. Thou mayest be saying to thyself, such happiness can never be mine. Why shouldst thou doubt when thy Lord has promised thee, if faithful unto death, a crown of life? "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord."

"The pure in heart shall see God." Not as we see Him here, but in the full manifestations of His divine glory. Let Paul's motto be yours, "This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Before his faith-lit eye was flashing life's far goal, heaven's unfading crown of righteousness, and, like the Grecian athlete, night and day, might and main, body and soul, he strove and struggled onward and upward. And the end of his efforts, and the aim of all his strugglings, was progress in holiness, progress towards heaven. As he ran, so run ye.

PARADISE A REALITY.

PARADISE is no dreamland, or fanciful creation of the human mind, but a place where "the streams thereof make glad the city of our God." The Paradise of the future is as much a reality as the Paradise of the past.

"Out and away, somewhere, it will be found,
The Central Throne, the Palace of the King,
Where God Himself His own is welcoming,
And white-robed saints eternally are crowned—
Where all celestial ecstacies abound.
The bliss of bloom, beneath the cloudless skies,
Like love, unfolds to love's bewildered eyes,
And love's soft song melts in delicious sound.
When shall I reach that high and holy clime?
My friends go up in chariots of light,
While I must wait for all their bliss sublime.
Hush! Taught of God, I rise to new delight:
And, as the lake reflects the skies above,
Find heaven abides, e'en here, in the pure heart of love."

Whence comes this love for the unseen, this longing

after invisible things; this fondness for something beyond the barriers of our present existence, if there is nothing but annihilation there? Why this casting forward the unextinguishable thought into the Unknown, if being is not there? Why these aspirations, which are in the bosom of every man, after a more ethereal and perfect nature? Why does imagination so often kindle its fires in the world beyond, if we are not allied to something infinitely greater than anything on earth? Why these pantings after some lasting good, if we have no bond which unites us to the Holiest? Why these golden glimpses of a land garlanded with celestial flowers, which fling their odours on every breeze—the flowers of love and rest, full of divine breathing and full of divine expression? Why these shadowings of the lovely and the true, the dawn streaking so often the horizon of man's soul and illuminating its mysterious abysses with glory, if we are not the sons of the universal King and universal Lord?

Does divine revelation give us any reason for the hope that is within us of a future state of happiness? Paul says: "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, and

was not, for God took him." "Abraham, with Isaac and Jacob, co heirs with him of the same promise, while on earth looked for a city whose builder and maker is God. All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but beholding them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them, and confessed that they were pilgrims and strangers on earth. For they that say these things declare that they seek a country. And truly if they had been mindful of that whence they came out they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, a *heavenly*, therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city."

"The Hebrews regarded life as a journey, a pilgrimage on the earth. The traveller, as they supposed, when he arrived at the end of his journey, which happened when he died, was received into the company of his ancestors who had gone before him. Opinions of this kind are the origin and ground of such phrases as 'to be gathered unto one's people,' 'to go to one's fathers'"—*Jahn's Archæology*.

Can we for a moment believe that the "great cloud of witnesses" who devoted and sacrificed their lives for the good of others, prompted by the hope of their

immortality, have been following only the light of a "Will-o'-the-wisp," which shall go out in utter and eternal darkness in the grave? No! On the contrary, those witnesses, whose shining ranks stretch back to Calvary and beyond it, shall have their exceeding great reward beyond the grave. When on the Mount of Transfiguration Christ allowed some of His hidden glory to shine forth, as the hill-top on which He appeared was suddenly changed into Heaven, Peter, in the name of his two companions, could only exclaim in the excess of his rapture: "Lord, it is good for us to be here." And he would fain have pitched his tent and abided amid the splendours and spiritual delights of this New Presence. It was a foretaste of Heaven so to be with Christ. But, oh, the difference between the glory and delight of Tabor, and the clear vision and bliss of Paradise. Had not Moses and Elijah, who appeared to the three disciples on this occasion, no place of abode? The very presence of these two glorified saints bear testimony that in some part of the universe there is a place where the departed saints dwell, which is called Paradise or Heaven. If there be no such place, the language of the Bible has no meaning. The words that indicate motion to and from this place, and residence in it are constantly used in the

Word of God, and that too, with reference to God, to Christ, to the holy angels, and also the redeemed who go from this world to Heaven. It is said that God dwells in Heaven, that Christ came down from Heaven, that He ascended up into Heaven. To the thief on the cross He said: "To-day thou shalt be with me in Paradise." The closing chapters of the Revelation by St. John are generally regarded as containing about all we know of Heaven as a place. John was invited by one of the angels to come and look upon the Bride, the Lamb's wife. "And he carried me away," says the Apostle, "in the spirit, to a great and high mountain and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem," the metropolis of Paradise. Then follows a description of its architecture, and the design unquestionably is, by appeals to all that God has implanted within us of the appreciation and love of form, colour, order and architecture, to establish the most perfect conviction of the reality of Heaven. The recital of dimensions and specifications of materials, and of their orderly arrangement, all contribute to this. The foundations of the wall of the city garnished with all manner of precious stones, such as jasper, sapphire, emerald, topaz and amethyst; and the twelve gates, every several gate of one pearl, are suited

at once to illustrate the inexhaustible riches of the Great Artificer, and to portray the honour to which His saints are to be raised, when they shall fill and also constitute the place for which they are designed. This, you will, perhaps, say, is taking great liberty with the term place. Indeed it is; but I would have you to consider that I am not the author of this licence.

John says: "I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it;" a directness of access and a completeness of fellowship is assured. There is an exceeding beauty and interest in this assurance. In the ever-open gates is a beautiful representation of the security of the place and of its purity. Christ brought Heaven, in its elements, down to earth; and being taught of Him, we have no need that the furniture of Heaven should be uncovered to us. Invited to dine with the King, it is not necessary to our happiness to possess, in advance, a picture of His palace; nor do we need to know either its architecture or its grandeur. Knowing the wealth and taste of the King, we are sure of kingly appointments; and knowing our King, we know that His house is worthy of Him. Cultivate your taste to the utmost, and be sure you will not be disappointed. No unexpected

Discoveries will revolt you, no detected deficiency will pain you. The six days of creation inaugurated a grand procession of the elements of heavenly beauty. Apply to these all ideas of beauty and of magnificence since bestowed on us. Picture to yourself the glory of the temple of Solomon. The blaze and beauty which broke upon the astonished gaze of the Queen of Sheba, herself abounding in magnificence, so overpowered her that there was no strength left in her. Having realized all this, as fully as may be done, and having added to it all the pomp and gorgeousness which your own sight or reading may have supplied, remember that the sum total of seeing, reading and imagining, is but a feeble emblem of God's resources, and of what may properly be anticipated of Heaven.

Be comforted, troubled hearts—light from above breaks gradually and sweetly on your darkness. See you not that all faith and hope of the world before Christ pointed to heaven, to the true Holy of Holies, to the house of God unbuilt by man, and over which Christ our Lord is King? Into that home the blood of Christ has opened to us a "new and living way," on which you may travel, and at the terminus of which you shall find, if faithful, the Paradise of God. Death will put us in connection with it. When the doors of

our earthly prison are battered down we shall find the celestial highways open and guides awaiting. Every death-bed is a station on the thoroughfare, and when the death-knell sounds, a chariot will be at the door.

WHERE IS PARADISE ?

In what particular part of the universe Heaven is situated has not been revealed. It is represented as being above, which refers more to its greatness and grandeur than to its position, for by the rotation of the earth the heavens that are above us now, in twelve hours are beneath us. Christian philosophers in every age have tried to ascertain its identical location, but failed. Their opinions are strangely diversified. Some have located it on the earth, but this cannot be the Holy Place of which the Bible speaks. God visits the earth but does not reside here, except as an omnipresent Being. This is not the abode of the angels, and glorified saints, but of probationers for eternity. Some writers believe that after the resurrection the new earth will be the saints' everlasting abode. If this be so, Heaven where now dwell the angels and "just men made perfect" will be uninhabited, otherwise there will be two heavens, unless the Heaven that now is be united with the earth. There is no

evidence in the Scriptures to support this idea. We are told by Peter that the heavens "shall be dissolved and pass away with a great noise." When the city of Athens was burned by the Persians the noise was terrific, but who can describe the roar of the elements when the heavens and the earth are being consumed? After they have passed through this purifying ordeal we are to have "new heavens and a new earth." The present heavens and the earth are to be destroyed, not annihilated. There is no such thing as annihilation in either the material or spiritual world. Not an atom of anything shall be absolutely destroyed, but the earth will take a new form and present a new appearance. The new creation will be superlatively more beautiful than the former, and righteousness shall dwell therein. It shall not be stained with sin or sullied with uncleanness. In consequence of the grandeur and purity of the new earth, it is thought that it will be the heaven of the future. But the place where Jehovah has now His throne is an everlasting habitation. Some divines have taught that heaven is located in some distant planet of the solar system. Some of these are visible to the eye and were known to the ancients, others are only seen by telescopic aid. Our planet is the only one, as far

as we know, that has received its name from the Creator. The sun is the centre of what is known as the solar system, and though immeasurable to the finite mind, it forms but a small part of the universe. It is said the sun is one million four hundred thousand times larger than the earth. From this we may form some conception of the immensity of the solar system. Is Heaven in any part of it? If the heavens are to pass away, how can the abode of the saints be located here? We are inclined to think that it is in some more distant part of Jehovah's domain.

We may form some idea of the magnitude of the universe by considering the time that it takes light, which travels at the rate of one hundred and ninety thousand miles a second, to come to the earth. From the moon it comes to us in one and a quarter seconds—the sun in eight minutes—Jupiter in fifty-two minutes—Uranus in two hours—a star of the first magnitude three to twelve years—a star of the fifth magnitude sixty years—a star of the twelfth magnitude four thousand years. The light which left this star when the Israelites departed from Egypt has not yet reached our earth. Some of the stars are so distant that it would take a ray of light travelling at the rate of twelve million miles a minute, thirty million years to reach the earth.

"How sublime the idea that
The universe is a thought of the Deity."

Whether those planets are inhabited or not is a subject of much speculation and controversy by philosophers. It may be that these worlds are inhabited by beings organically adapted to the world in which they reside. Why should we look upon this opinion as visionary? In every known part of the creation we see wisdom and design; and as this earth was created for the abode of man, so the other planets and stars may have been created for a race of beings not unlike the inhabitants of this world. Is it too much to suppose that each sphere has a revelation from God suitable to the capacity and circumstances of its inhabitants? Such a conjecture is designed to place the Divine Creator before us as possessing infinite power and wisdom, and what idea can we conceive of Him that is too great? The highest flights of imagination cannot pass the bounds of His greatness. Heaven may be located beyond the starry heavens, and be the great centre around which the numberless and measureless worlds revolve, as Milton says:

"Thus they in heaven above the starry sphere
Their happy hours of joy and hymning spent."

The Hebrew doctors and commentators commonly taught that there are seven heavens, or divisions of the universe, outside our globe, the highest or remotest of which was the abode of the blessed. St. Paul speaks of being "caught up into the third heaven" and then "caught up into Paradise," as if the "third heaven" was only a resting place on the upward journey to Paradise. But St. Paul, like the Hebrew teachers, from whom he had learned cosmography, did not presume to give a precise and formally revealed notion of the supernal Paradise and its location in space. Both he and they spoke in accordance with the science of their respective ages and the traditional notions inherited from the past. St. Thomas Aquinas maintains that there are three heavens, the sidereal, or starry heavens, the crystalline and the empyrean or Heaven of heavens—this last being the place where God has created the home of His elect, the kingdom and empire reserved to His faithful servants, angels and men.

No doubt for a wise purpose God's holy habitation is concealed from us. It has been ascertained that there are stars 198,345,600,000,000,000 miles distant from the earth, and the great centre round which all the stars and planets revolve must be double or more

that distance from us. It may be somewhere in this locality Heaven is located. The assertion cannot be proved, but there is much probability in its favor. Here, then, may be an order of intelligences beside the great and infinite Creator, so gifted as to be able to behold the immensity of God's creative power and wisdom,—worlds blazing in splendor, varying in swiftness, dimensions and locality. Such a sight would be a source of overwhelming joy to the greatest mind and would augment the pleasure of the heavenly hosts. I cannot find any that come nearer to the sacred oracle's idea with regard to the position of Heaven than the one last mentioned. Heaven is unquestionably the place where light originated. That light existed prior to the creation of the sun is clearly shown from the fact, that on the first day God said, "Let there be light, and there was light," and the sun was not created till the fourth day. Light is the most beautiful and astonishing of all material productions. It is the great medium by which God's works are discovered, learned and understood, so far as they can be known. God is the "Father of lights," and Heaven being His immediate dwelling-place, it is illuminated by His presence, which is diffused through every part of His boundless dominion. In support of this idea that Heaven is the

great centre of light, we refer to Jehovah's interview with Job. In enumerating His mighty works to His servant, to show him his ignorance, He asks, among other questions: "Where is the way where light dwelleth?" This question is unanswerable. It does not dwell in the sun, moon and stars—they are only the medium through which light comes from the great unbounded fountain of light. Darkness results from the absence of light, and as God is the light of Heaven, there can be no darkness there. John says: "The city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; and the glory of God did lighten it and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor unto it. And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day, and there shall be no night there." "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." "He only hath immortality, dwelling in light which no man can approach unto." The angels are beings of light. When the angel visited Peter in prison, the cell was lit up with his presence. The redeemed in Heaven are called "saints of light."

Heaven is one infinite day,—an eternal noon that knows no darkness. Though we cannot point out

its exact latitude or longitude, be assured that it is located in the most exalted and unchangeable part of the universe. When we speak of Heaven, it is natural for us to look or point upward—a fact which may be illustrated by the following touching incident: Two little Italians accompanied a man with a harp out of a certain city. He played and they sang at every door. Their voices were sweet, and their words in an unknown tongue. Not knowing how to make themselves understood these children, when they had finished singing, shyly held out their little hands to receive what might be given to them, and to take it to the dark man outside the gate, who stood waiting to receive it. One day the harpist went to sleep, and the little boy and girl being tired of waiting for him to awake, went to a cottage under the hill and began to sing under the window. They sang sweetly as the voices of birds. Presently the blinds were opened, and they saw by the window a fair lady on a sick bed looking at them. Her eyes shone with feverish light, and the color of her cheeks was flushed with a crimson hue. She smiled and asked them if they were tired, and they said a few words softly in their own language. "Are not the green fields better than your city?" she asked. They

shook their heads. "Have you a mother?" she remarked. They looked perplexed, and thought she asked for another song, and they sang one so full of pathos that tears came into the lady's eyes. That was a language they had learned. So they sang another sweeter still. At this the lady kissed her hand and passed it to them. Their beautiful faces kindled, and like a flash the tiny hands passed back a kiss. She pointed up to the sky and sent a kiss thither. At this they sank upon their knees and also pointed thither, as much as asking, "Do you know the good God?"

Thither we who are Christians look often through our tears to that blessed home to which our loved ones are gone, and to which we hope to ascend. The infidel may smile at our so-called fanaticism, and scoff at our faith in the things which are unseen, but we shall cling to the blessed hope that beyond the shadows of the valley there is a home of happiness and joy—"a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

We will conclude this section by the insertion of a beautiful poem entitled the "Better Land," by Mr. Hemans. It describes the yearnings of a lovely child who evidently desired to learn more of Heaven where her treasure and her heart seemed to be.

"I hear thee speak of a better land,
 Thou callest its children a happy band ;
 Mother, oh ! where is that radiant shore ?
 Shall we not seek it and weep no more ?
 Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
 Or fire-flies glance through the myrtle boughs ?"
 "Not there, not there, my child."

"Is it where the feathery palm-trees rise,
 And the date grows ripe under sunny skies,
 Or midst the green islands of glittering seas,
 Where fragrant forests perfume the breeze,
 And strange bright birds on their starry wings
 Bear the rich hues of all glorious things ?"
 "Not there, not there, my child."

"Is it far away in some region old
 Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold,
 Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
 And the diamond lights up the secret mine,
 And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand
 Is it there, sweet mother, that better land ?"
 "Not there, not there, my child."

"Ye hath not seen it, my gentle boy,
 Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy,
 Dreams cannot picture a world so fair,
 For sorrow and death do not enter there,
 Time doth not breathe on its fadless bloom
 Far beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb ;
 It is there, it is there, my child."

THE GLORY OF PARADISE.

"I heard the voice of harpers harping sweetly
On golden harps,
I saw a crystal river, calmly, mildly
Its waters roll'd,
I caught the flash of turrets wrapt in splendor
Of sunless light,
Like to a star most lustrous, shedding glory
Out of the night,
I dream'd of lands Elysian, emerald islands
In shining seas,
Soft perfume, wafted by sweet whispering breezes,
From fadless trees.
I saw the ranks of angels, silver-pinion'd
And golden crown'd,
Swift radiant forms, that like a sunbeam passing,
Touched the bright ground;
I saw the ancient worthies, heroes saintly,
Resting in calm,
Clad in white robes, out of great tribulation
Bearing the palm,
I saw a King in beauty cloud-encircled,
Shrouded in light;

The blueness of a throne, a sea of glory
Dazzling all sight,

A voice of great waters—myriads falling
Low on the sod:

A silence—harps struck louder—seraphs singing
Glory to God."

A CELEBRATED traveller, after visiting the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa, and beholding the wonders of nature and the beauties of art, came to America and visited the Falls of Niagara. As he listened to the rush and roar of the mighty waters and saw them in their wild fury sweep over the rocky precipice into the seething abyss beneath, he exclaimed, "How grand! How beautiful! There is only one Niagara." We may also remark, there is only one Heaven in the universe.

The late Dr. Winter Hamilton, in describing the land of Canaan, once the inheritance of Israel, says: "It was variegated and intersected with all the elements of sublimity and beauty, with whatever was bold and gentle. It was prolific without a miracle, and the subject of a periodical one. Aromatic herbs covered its hills, and the fairest flowers decked its

glena. The rose was in Sharon and the lily in the valley. The voice of the turtle was heard in the land. There roamed the vine, and there clustered the date, and there hung the pomegranate. The cedar towered on the mountains and the myrtle skirted its sides. No human hand could raise the clusters of Eshool. The south wind passing over the gardens caused the spices to flow out. The seasons revolved in their variety, but with a blending sweetness. There was the upland breeze on which the fir could wave its arms, and the soft air in which the olive unfolded its blossoms. The sun smote not by day nor the moon by night. The birds sang among the branches. The dew lay thick upon Hermon. There was the balm in Gilead. The ling-aloe dropped from the river bank. Kedron and Jordan poured forth their streams. The rain also filled the pools. Lakes glistened in the landscape and cooled the drought. Beautiful for situation was Mount Zion. The cattle browsed on a thousand hills. The excellency of Carmel and the glory of Lebanon set their pinnacles against the deep azure of Canaan's sky. The year was crowned with goodness. The Lord God cared for that land, and His eyes were always upon it. At the stated period fell the early and latter rains.

The pastures were clothed with flocks. The ploughman overtook the reaper, and the bearer of grapes him that sowed seed. The barns were filled with plenty, and the presses burst out with new wine. The little hills rejoiced on every side. Precious fruits were brought forth by the sun, and precious things were put forth by the moon. The vineyards distilled the pure blood of the grape. The fountain of Jacob was upon a land of corn and wine. The inhabitants were filled with the finest of the wheat. It flowed with milk and honey. Its leaves dropped fatness. It was surrounded with mountains of rock. The deep, couching beneath, spread its sure defence. The land might be called Beulah. The distant glimpse of its prospects refreshed the dying eye of Moses, and of thine earthly territory this is emphatically Thy land, oh, Immanuel."

The early Christian scholars and teachers whom we call the fathers of the Church, were wont to give their contemporaries some idea of the physical aspect of the heavenly Paradise by describing the earthly one, thus enabling hearer or reader to conclude how incomparably superior the former must be to the latter. Thus, for instance, St. Basil speaks of Paradise : "There the winds lose their violence, the seasons their extreme

heat and cold ; there is neither hail nor lightning, nor whirlwinds, neither the frosts of winter nor the rains of spring, the heat of summer nor the withering dryness of autumn. All the seasons conspire to maintain a moderate and harmonious temperature. The seasons themselves seem to circulate with joyous dance around that happy realm. All the pleasures of spring-tide blend there with the ~~fecundity~~ ^{fruitfulness} of summer, the joys of autumn, and the repose of winter. The streams are narrow and clear, delightful to the eye by their brightness, sources of greater usefulness even than pleasure. God made the place on purpose to be a nursery for all His plants and flowers. With time sprang up trees of every kind, most beautiful to look upon, most delightful to the eye, and bearing all manner of delicious fruit. But the words of St. Basil are colourless, and fail to bring forth in relief a single outline of the Divine picture afforded by the reality. The highest sanctity and the sublimest genius, while encumbered with this body of flesh, vainly strive to think out what the land of the living should be and is, and more vainly still, attempt to express these feeble imaginings. It must suffice, so long as we are in this mortal body, that we recall to mind the pregnant words of St. John, that this glorious empire, destined to be man's true

and everlasting home has been created, ordered and adorned by the hand of the Infinite Father, like a bride for the bridegroom ; yes, throughout its length and breadth, the land of the living is the masterpiece of the Divine magnificence ; it is the home of that society which is the mystic body of Christ Himself, purchased by His blood and made happy by every contrivance of His power. The very names bestowed in the Holy Scriptures on the heavenly abode, and the very description given of it under these various designations, indicate extraordinary perfection and loveliness in the physical condition of the place. If it is painted to us as a city, its structures are of the rarest, most precious, and most magnificent materials known to the human mind, or even expressed in human language.

" If we divest the descriptions given of the saints' everlasting rest, of the high colouring so natural to the Oriental imagination and of the figurative forms given by the language of all Eastern peoples, the simple substance and obvious meaning of the sacred writers will suffice to prove that in the city of God on high the Divine magnificence will display itself by surrounding the happy denizens with all the objects which can charm the purified and exalted bodily

sense." The first great object of attraction in the empire of eternity will be the Holy City. Its name Holy City is peculiar to Heaven. The walls of the city are built of the most precious stones and its twelve gates are one pearl. Its streets are paved with gold, and its mansions are inexpressibly beautiful. They are not crowded together like the residences of this world, but spacious and of endless variety. How many of the Lord's children in this world are homeless and in want, but by-and-by they shall have a glorious and incorruptible inheritance, before the splendours of which the most costly and magnificent palaces of earth pale. There are also the robes and crowns of the saints, the emblems of dignity and purity. "*Green pastures*," into which the Lamb shall lead His people. "*Still waters*," on the banks of which the redeemed shall walk. There is also the River of Life, on either side of which stand trees of perpetual verdure. How broad and expansive is this river. There is music in its gentle flow. How different to the rivers of earth, as to its name, source and quality. It flows from under the throne of God and the Lamb, and its waters are as clear as crystal. The rivers of earth generally have their source in some mountain or crag. They increase in width and depth by the

tributaries that flow into them. But the river of life rolls on majestically without increase or diminution. Its shores are fringed with the branches of the Tree of Life, under whose foliage are grouped angelic and glorified saints in joyful concert.

Of this river the prophet Ezekiel says, "By the river upon the bank thereof on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade neither shall the fruit thereof be consumed, it shall bring forth new fruit according to his months, because their waters they issued out of the sanctuary, and the fruit thereof shall be for meat and the leaf for medicine." There are no such trees as these either for meat, medicine or beauty. But what need is there for medicine in a land where the inhabitants are never sick? What need was there for the tree of knowledge of good and evil in Paradise? These are mysteries we cannot satisfactorily explain. It is one of those problems which the higher life can only solve. *There shall be no more sea.* These words refer to a period of rest. There shall arise no shade to darken, no tempest to discompose. For in the days of our eternal youth the clouds return not after the former rain. No more dangers, hazards, likened to perils on the sea. It was on the sea-shore that St. Paul knelt and prayed

and wept at leaving those whom a strong affection and kindred faith had so mutually endeared. There shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor sighing.

A writer beautifully remarks, "that in the deepest moral darkness there can be music that is sweeter and softer than by day, and when the instruments of human melody are broken there is a hand that sweeps the heart-strings and makes the notes of praise."

In the year 1847 a number of poor Irish emigrants fever-stricken, and alas! death-stricken, were placed in quarantine on Gross Island, which is situated midway in the St. Lawrence. There was no hospital accommodation for one-fifth of the number, or a spring of fresh and wholesome water for the fevered, famished people, who roamed among the rocks with the thermometer above 90°, in quest of a cool refreshing draught. One poor aged woman wandered out in the darkness to find one who could give spiritual consolation to the dying. When she found him, in a half-dreamy way she muttered in her native language, "Sure I know it's half dead they must be, the darlin' gentlemint, every one of them. But my poor, poor boy is tak' very sudden intiraly, and he won't give me any peace till I bring you to him. An' it's meself is not much better. God help me, with the fever, and

the thirst, and the grief that is breaking my heart
For I have buried three of them since we left Cork.
And he is the only one I have now." By this time
the clergyman had come out into the sultry midnight
air, and at the sight of the poor mother poured forth
a prayer to God in that fervent, figurative and
eloquent language which wells so naturally from Irish
lips up from the warm depths of the Irish heart. The
woman was scarcely able to stand, but she summoned
all her remaining strength to guide the missionary
to where she had left her dying son. Some of their
fellow-emigrants, compassionating both mother and
son, had found them a shady nook among the rocks
and beneath the shelter of some scrubby, overhanging
fir. There, lying on a bundle of clothes or bedding, lay
a youth of twenty summers. The man of God lost no
time in giving the consolation necessary to one so near
his end. The boy was already half delirious. But a
draught from the cool and stimulating beverage brought
by the clergyman restored the sufferer to momentary
consciousness and vigour. His only care in dying was
about his lonely, poor widowed mother. But when
the missionary promised him that she should not be
friendless, all his thoughts were for God. "Sure God
has been good to us," the mother said, as she sat down

by her boy's side, and had taken the heavy aching head on her lap. Looking into his face, as the tears ran down her wan cheeks, she said, "Sure 'tis Himself has come to you asthere to take you to Himself. It's in His own blessed heaven you'll soon be; and I'll not be long behind, please God. For I'm tired of this world, an' I'm longin' to be with God, an' with your father and the childer." And she fondly kissed the face turned up to her in the faint light of the lantern. The missionary on his return to his college sent back with one of the sick nurses a warm shawl to protect the widow and her son from the heavy night dew, and some cooling drinks for them. The next morning, as soon as he could, he hastened to the spot where he had left them, resolved to find them as speedily as possible a shelter from the burning sun. The boy was already dead and some of the emigrants were with the disconsolate mother, offering whatever comfort and aid they could in their utter helplessness. She still sat with her back against the rock, as he had left her some six or seven hours previously, supporting the head of her son on her lap, and talking to him in a low, sweet voice; as if she beheld him in the better world. When she became aware of the missionary's presence she looked up at him with hollow, tearless

eyes, but with a rapt expression, and a countenance that seemed touched with a light beyond the grave. "Ah then, ye're welcome your riverence," she said. "He's at home now, thank God. Yes, it's at home you are at last," she went on, looking down fondly on the calm young face of him who seemed to sleep so sweetly on the maternal bosom. It's better for you to be with God than to be thryin' to build up a cabin for the ould mother among strangers. God'll soon bring me to where you're all gone before." As she spoke, the words fell from her lips one by one wearily, almost inaudibly at last. The missionary, deeply moved, and trying to steel himself against emotion which took away much of the strength he needed, spoke to the bereaved mother as tenderly as he could. But she heard him not, she had fainted. When she recovered consciousness, it was evident that the strength of maternal love, which had till then kept her up, was giving way to the terrible fever. The change from shipboard to the open air, and the fever-laden atmosphere of the island, with a day and night exposure, had fearfully developed the germs of the disease in her system. The missionary had her carried to the little chapel near his cottage, where kind hands would minister to her. Before sunset that even-

ing the dead body of her tall, handsome son was laid to rest, with those of more than a hundred other victims, in one common grave. A day or two afterwards the poor widow breathed her last. In her own beautiful and most truthful language, she "went home."

No chastisement for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous. Ask that mother who is sitting by the side of her pale, cold child, silent and unconscious, the pulsations of life stopped, and the spirit fled to return no more—ask her if there is not a keenness in affliction. Ask that youthful widow whose bridal robes have been so soon changed for the habiliments of mourning; whose bright visions of earthly happiness have all faded, and whose beloved companion sleeps in the grave. Enter that family where death has preceded you, and how suddenly has the voice of gaiety and the music of mirth been hushed, how changed is every countenance, every movement, every heart; the spirit of melancholy broods over the scene. The very room and furniture seem to whisper, "Tread lightly, for a dread, mysterious messenger hath visited this family and laid its hopes in ashes. Wounded hearts are here to which mere words of comfort seem formal and cold, sorrows are here that earth cannot heal."

Sin is the parent of all sorrow; as a consequence

man is born to trouble. It has made this world a vast scene of weeping ; but in Heaven there is neither sorrow nor sighing. The head shall languish no more, the heart shall throb and palpitate no more. There shall be no paralytic limbs, no palsied forms, no trembling nerves, but there shall be immortal vigour and youth and never-fading beauty. The pulse of immortality shall beat strongly in every vein. The golden harps shall never drop from their hands. No chilling blasts shall cool their fervour. No sudden showers shall extinguish the flame of love which glows and burns in their bosoms. Where God is there can be no death ; where holy angels dwell there can be no sorrow ; where celestial music rolls, in strains deep and grand, there can be no sighing ; where Jesus reigns there can be no tears. "Oh, thou tossed with tempest and not yet comforted," thou who art driven by adverse winds from thy course and disappointed of thy hope, when it was fondly thought thy troubles were over ! Wait awhile and thou shalt escape the blast of the tempest and enter into peace.

"There shall be no night there." He that sitteth upon the throne shall throw a lustre over the temple, its worshippers, mansions and thrones, on which the mantle of darkness shall never settle. There every-

thing that now appears dark and mysterious shall be revealed. All error and prejudice shall be dispelled. The soul shall be furnished with every high, intellectual and moral attainment suited to its vast and comprehensive powers. With clear vision we shall view and investigate the wondrous works of creation, providence and grace. Our knowledge will not be tainted by sin or delusion. It shall no more be chequered like the twilight of morning with the shades of evening, but it shall be clear, expansive, everlasting and divine. The knowledge of Heaven will be progressive, just as the light shineth more and more unto the perfect day. But its progression will be without pain—not earned at the expense of health. The mind there will not be like the flint, consumed by every spark it strikes, but we shall drink at the free, unsealed and overflowing fountain of truth.

Think of being one of the guests at the marriage supper of the Lamb, when the bride—the Church—is presented to the Heavenly Bridegroom. Earth has its luxuries—luxuries for the eye, the ear, and the taste. A dinner was lately given by a lady of New York, which was more costly a head than any previous entertainment of the kind. The contract price was one hundred and seventy dollars for each plate.

The caterer sent to Florida and to Central and South America for ferns, palms, ivy, mandarin trees, and other decorations. For truffles he sent to France; and strawberries, arranged in bouquets of five berries each, cost seven dollars and fifty cents per bunch. The table was arranged about a miniature lake, in which palms, lilies and ferns appeared to be growing, while tropical trees rose from the banks amid miniature parterres of flowers. Small electric lights with vari-coloured globes were arranged about the lake, and electricity was introduced under the water of the improvised lake and caused to dance about in imitation of vari-coloured fish. There was a fountain in the centre of the lake, and a coloured glass ball, lighted by electricity, spouted up and down a jet of crystal water. There was no cloth on the table, and each of the twenty courses served at the dinner was placed before the guests on a natural palm leaf. The wall and room decorations generally were of smilax, ferns, ivy and palm, mandarin, banana, orange and other trees. Hanging among them were hundreds of very small coloured electric lights. The individual decorations of each plate cost thirty dollars, the favours as much more, and the menus were painted to order at ten dollars each. Roman punch was served in oranges hanging on the

natural trees, the pulp of the fruit having been deftly removed, so that the guests picked their own fruit from the branches for the first time.

But what are the banquets of millionaires, or even of royalty, when compared to the banquet of the King of kings? The hall, if we may call it such, in which the glorified saints are assembled, how God-like its architecture! Its upholstering surpasses all earthly magnificence, and it is illuminated by the Divine presence. The altitude of its dome archangel's pinions have never reached, and its length and breadth are as capacious as the pavilion of Jehovah. Soft music floats among its arches, and the word "WELCOME" rolls out in rich seraphic strains. There is a halo of glory around the head of each guest, and it falls on them as a garment. It is not an earthly, but a heavenly feast. Only such a feast could satisfy the aspirations of such guests. It consists of the beatific vision—beholding the beaties of the King and the unfading glories which surround His presence. The unfolding of the treasures of Divine wisdom, the love of God to man, and His providential dealings with His people, and infinitely more good things than the human mind can conceive, which will fill every heart with inexpressible joy. Such a

feast we may anticipate when we are admitted to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

These heavenly attractions say to each one of us, "Come ye up higher," and our blessed Saviour and those of our loved ones who have entered into their rest say, "Come!" How they cheer us on our journey thitherward! In our loneliness and distress they beckon us to their blissful homes, and the anticipation of meeting them there makes the burdens of our pilgrimage seem lighter. It would not become mortal man to speak of the august splendour of the throne of God around which, like a starry belt, sit the four and twenty elders. It is a subject too awful and sublime for us to approach. John says: "He that sat upon the throne was, to look upon, like jasper and sardine stone, and there was a rainbow round about the throne in sight like unto an emerald." Before it stood the angels of God, and beneath it the martyrs of the Crucified.

THE NATIVES OF PARADISE.

THESE glorious beings form the "general assembly and Church of the First-born," and are a superior order of intelligences. When they were created is beyond all possible human calculation. They may have existed before the earth and the heavens were formed.

They are not corporeal, but spiritual beings. "He maketh his angels spirits and His ministers flames of fire." So refined is their nature that they resemble flame. They are the messengers of Jehovah, the officers of the celestial state, the couriers of the King of kings, who obey His commands and do His pleasure. They are represented under the symbols of boldness, activity, prudence and heavenly-mindedness, and furnished with wings that they may execute the Divine mandates with the speed of lightning.

Milton, in his description of the great Messiah driving Lucifer and the apostate angels out of heaven, says:

—“Forth rushed, with whirlwind sound,
The chariot of Paternal Deity,
Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel undrawn,
Itself instinct with spirit, but convoy’d
By four cherubic shapes, four faces each
Had, wondrous; as with stars their bodies all,
And wings, were set with eyes; dark eyes, the wheels
Of beryl.”—

Many fanciful things have been said by Dionysius and others about the angels. They tell us there are nine distinct orders—Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones, Dominions, Powers, Virtues, Principalities, Archangels, Angels—and each of these orders had their leader or chief. But here I would say with one of old: “When Heaven has no tongue to speak, we ought to have no ears to hear.” Hidden things belong to God; the things only which are made known belong to us. But it is revealed that twelve legions, at least, were at the command of Christ. (Matt. xxvi. 58.) Twelve Roman legions would be 72,000 foot and 8,760 horse—in all 80,760. Two myriads, or 20,000, attended on Mount Zion; the same number, as a select band or body guard, all invincibles, attended Christ’s ascension. (Ps. lxvii. 17; Eph. iv. 8.) Yea, before and round about the throne are ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of

thousands. (Dan. vii. 10; Rev. v. 11.) An innumerable company of angels (myriads of angels). (Heb. xii. 22.) The least of whom, if commissioned, could remove or destroy the world. Several instances are given in the Scriptures of angelic powers.

The apostle John saw seven mighty angels standing before God, with seven trumpets in their hands. As one startling peal followed another, the most terrific woes descended and burst upon the earth. The sky was darkened by fearful storms, and the deep, heavy thunders and vivid lightnings told that the day of God's wrath was come. Chariots of fire were seen coursing through the air, bearing the messengers of Divine vengeance. Burning mountains were hurled to and fro, and consumed everything in their reach; stars fell, the sky became darkened, the sun became as sackcloth of hair, and the moon assumed the appearance of blood. In the midst of these wild commotions and terrible calamities, a voice was heard crying: "Babylon is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication." He heard the crash of her falling palaces, and saw the smoke ascending from her ruins, her haughty kings laid low and their crowns and thrones buried beneath the ruins of the city.

The altitudes of angelic knowledge cannot be accurately defined. There are subjects which exceed their comprehension. We read that God "charges His angels with folly." Nevertheless they must possess vast stores of wisdom. They have no shattered memories to grapple with, sleep never falls upon their eyes, no new languages to acquire, never disheartened by misapplied labors, retarded by sickness, poverty or incompetent instruction; but with immortal energy they can ponder, analyze and discuss those mighty matters relating to an eternal state of being. In the anticipation of associating with such glorious beings, we may indulge the expectation of deriving the highest intellectual pleasure. With what marvellous ease will they elucidate the mysteries of creation—the beginning and formation of the worlds that people immensity. What thoughts will flash upon our minds as they discourse on those great subjects which have baffled the master intellects of earth. The unblemished purity of the angels is evident from the purity of their abode. How delightful to contemplate the society of such beings, whose thoughts, purposes and acts are resplendent with holiness. Their names give us an exalted conception of their purity, dignity, and elevated position. They are called the "sons of God,"

the morning stars ever lighted up with the glorious beams of the Sun of Righteousness. They are immortal; possessed of an unending existence. Our intercourse with them will continue forever. Although the angels are represented as executing the judgments of Jehovah, they delight in missions of love. With what swiftness did one of their brethren hasten to Hagar in the wilderness to relieve her distress, and afford her comfort in her loneliness and sorrow! With what earnestness did two of these illustrious beings manifest to save Lot and his family from ruin! But the most beautiful and affecting instances of their love are furnished in their ministrations to our Lord while He was on the cross. In infancy they watched over Him with the utmost tenderness, when a cruel tyrant thirsted for His blood and formed a conspiracy to destroy Him. In every stage of His progress he was emphatically "seen of angels." In that terrible scene in the garden, when He struggled with the rulers of the darkness of this world, and was ready to faint, there came an angel from Heaven to strengthen Him. When betrayed by Judas and about to be seized by the cruel mob, Christ said to Peter, after cutting off the ear of the servant of the high priest: "Thinkest thou not that I cannot now pray to My Father and He shall present'y

give Me more than twelve legions of angels." So ready was His Father to send them, that a word only was needed to secure the presence of a force that would disarm every foe. We may almost see the flaming legions pressing forward for the conflict; their swords flashing amid the awful darkness of that night, their faces burning with zeal to rescue the Lord of Life. But they were held back by the arm of Omnipotence. No legions are sent; no celestial warriors are engaged in the conflict. The Messiah's victory over death and hell the angels celebrated. Their arrival is announced by the shock of an earthquake, which struck terror into the breasts of the Roman guard, and they fell to the ground as dead men.

The angels watched the triumphant ascension of Christ into Heaven, and announced to the disciples His return to earth again. We have several instances recorded of the ministrations of angels to the Christian at the hour of death. Christ in His parable of the rich man and Lazarus tells that the beggar died and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. It is more than probable that every chamber where the good man meets his fate is privileged beyond the common walks of men by the visitation of angels. Hundreds of dying testimonies confirm this. Have

you not watched in the chambers of sickness the light of life fast waning away? Have you not seen the wings of the spirit, just at that moment of disembodying itself, gently moving and breaking the shell of its house of clay? But have you not also felt, as you stood amidst sorrowing friends, that other beings were present, fanning with their wings the exhausted frame of the dying, and directing the eye of the spirit to the sunlit shores of Canaan? What a brotherhood do the angels form! They are united by the bonds of perpetual friendship and love. They know no jealousy. They never pass each other in sullen silence, but smile meets smile. What a lovely society! How heavenly their conversation! No unhappy word ever passes their lips. Their thoughts and actions correspond with His who is the source of all purity. How inspiring the thought of having such holy beings for our brethren, who were, while on earth, though unseen, our benefactors and friends. Were we permitted, while in the flesh, to spend even a day with the angels in their paradisical home, how it would stimulate us to brave more heroically the coming battles of life, and endure with patience the fiercest storms that sweep down upon us! How we would look back with delight to those blessed hours! How

their encouraging words would nerve us for the last conflict! We would see their bright faces through the darkest cloud, and their fingers pointing to their homes of perfect happiness. But it is ordained by our Heavenly Father that no mortal eye shall see or foot tread that happy land. The disembodied spirit is only permitted to see the King in His beauty, and the land that is afar off.

THE SAINTS IN PARADISE.

"After this I beheld, and lo! a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and peoples, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands, and cried with a loud voice, saying: Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb."

All happy beyond expression, and beautiful beyond description. How close is our relationship to them.

"One family we dwell in Him,
One Church above, beneath,
Though now divided by the stream,
The narrow stream of death."

There is only one step between us—a step from poverty to riches; from pain to perfect health; from toil to rest; from sin to holiness. The glorified saints are so resplendent, so exalted in position and happy, as to cause us to doubt whether we are in any way related to them. Yet we are members of one family. St. John saw the heavenly multitude in white robes, with

crowns upon their heads and palms in their hands, and heard them singing, "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seal thereof, for Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests." One of the elders said unto him: "Who are these which are arrayed in white robes and whence came they?" He replied: "Sir, thou knowest." And he said unto him: "These are they which came out of great tribulations, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." We must admit that there is a little incongruity in this expression, "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," the meaning of which is, their souls were purified or redeemed by the death of Jesus. Under the ancient ritual various things about the temple were cleansed from ceremonial defilement by the sprinkling of blood; and the blood of the Lamb is said to cleanse and purify the robes of the saints. It is not said their robes were made white as the result of their sufferings or afflictions. This reference to the blood of the Lamb is one of the incidental proofs of the atonement of Christ that occur so frequently in the Scriptures, and it could only be

in allusion to, and a belief in it, that the blood of the Lamb could be referred to as cleansing the robes of the saints in Heaven. If He shed His blood merely as other men have done, and died only as a martyr, what propriety would there have been in referring to His blood more than to the blood of any other martyr, and what influence could the blood of any martyr have in cleansing the robes of the saints in Heaven? The fact is, if that were all, such language would be unmeaning. It is never used except in connection with the blood of Christ; and the language of the Bible everywhere corroborates the fact that He shed His blood to make an atonement for human guilt. The multitude before the throne are now enjoying the recompence which Christ's blood has purchased for them—"the crown of life." The highest distinction on earth is a crown. Few men ever attain to such honor. But the humblest saint in Heaven is a crown-wearer. Some of these crowns are brighter than others—star-gemmed. These are called "crowns of rejoicing." They are given for faithful service. Is there any variety in the worship and employment of Heaven? Is there but one song, one costume, one round of pleasure? There will be never-ending variety. Variety in every feature. This may be inferred from

the character of the people—gathered from all nations. The retrospect of such a multitude will be crowded with pleasing varieties; as they look back upon the difficulties through which they have passed, the temptations they have overcome, the persecutions they endured, and the many formidable obstacles they surmounted. There is variety in their employment and worship. They walk the streets of the Holy City, scale the everlasting hills, associate with the angels and study the great problems of redemption and everlasting life. The pursuits of the heavenly hosts are beautifully described by Pollock:

"Pursuits are various here, suiting all tastes,
Though holy all and glorifying God:
Observe you hand pursue the sylvan streams,
Mounting among the cliffs, they pull the flowers,
Springing as soon as pulled; and marvelling pry
Into its veins and circulating blood,
And wondrous mimicry of higher life;
Admire its colour, fragrance, gentle shape,
And then admire the God who made it so;
So simple, complex, and so beautiful.
Behold you other hand, in airy robes
Of bliss; they weave the sacred bower of rose
And myrtle shade and shadowy verdant bay,
And laurel, towering high; and round their song

The pink and lily blow, and amaranth,
Narcissus sweet and jessamine, and bring
The clustering vine, stooping with flowers and fruit ;
The peach and orange, and the sparkling stream,
Warbling with nectar to their lips unmasked,
And talk the while of everlasting love.
On yonder hill behold another band,
Of piercing, steady, intellectual eye,
And spacious forehead of sublimest thought ;
They reason deep of present, future, past,
And trace effect to cause and meditate
On the eternal laws of God, which lead
Circumference to centre, and survey
With optic tubes that fetch remotest stars
Near them, the systems circling round immense,
Innumerable. See how, as he the sage
Among the most renown'd in days of time
Demonstrates clearly motion, gravity,
Attraction and repulsion, still opposed ;
And dips into the deep, original,
Unknown mysterious elements of things.
See how the face of every auditor
Expands with admiration of the skill,
Omnipotence and boundless love of God !
Behold the other band, half lifted up
Betwix the hill and dale, reclined beneath
The shadows of impending rocks, 'mong streams
And thundering water-falls and waving boughs ;
That band of countenance sublime and sweet

Whose eyes, with piercing intellectual ray,
Now beam serene, or now bewildered seem—
Left rolling wild or fixed in idle gaze,
While fancy and the soul are far from home—
Those hold the pencil—art divine! and throw
Before the eye remembered scenes of love:
Each picturing to each the hills and skies
And treasured stories of the world he left;
Or, gazing on the scenery of heaven
They dip their hands in colour's nature well
And on the everlasting canvas dash
Figures of glory, imagery divine,
With grace and grandeur in perfection's point.
But whatsoe'er the spirits blessed pursue,
Where'er they go, whatever sights they see
Of glory and bliss thro' all the tracts of heaven,
The centre still, the figure eminent,
Whither they turn, on whom all eyes
Repose with infinite delight, is God
And His incarnate Son, the Lamb once slain
On Calvary, to ransom ruined man.
None idle here, look where thou wilt, they all
Are active, all engaged in meet pursuit,
Not happy else. Hence is of that the song
Of heaven ever new; for daily thus
And nightly new discoveries are made
Of God's unbounded wisdom, power and love,
Which give the understanding larger room
And swell the hymns with ever-growing praise."

Who can contemplate these heavenly enjoyments, as presented to us with such poetic force and beauty, without an ardent desire to spend an eternity in such glorious company? A moment of such bliss will reward us for all the sorrow we may have had to endure. But why do we attempt to describe the bliss of such a state, which no language or imagery can portray? The wild pomp of our mountains, the sublime silence of our forests, the variegated beauty of our valleys fragrant with roses, vocalized with the melodies of birds, and the peerless grandeur of the heavens, are but meagre representations of the glory of Heaven. Eye hath not seen its grandeur, ear hath not heard its melodies, and the heart of man cannot conceive the magnificence of the realms of the blest. If the gates and walls of the city be so beautiful, what must be the glory of the inner court! To this glorious place we shall be introduced by the ministering hand of our elder Brother, who shall conduct us into the presence of His Father's glory, which is kept in reserve for the faithful.

There we shall join with the angels in their sublime purity, and bask in the smiles of Jehovah's face, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Nothing shall interrupt our pleasure or decrease our joy, and our

happiness will be coeval with eternity. Happy change ! Glorious acquisition ! No more cares will mar our peace. Nightless day will shine with its full and meridian blaze, and pleasure without interruption will flow for evermore. It is only a little while and we shall be enthroned with kings and priests amidst the pomp of real greatness, and be possessed of unending felicity. We shall take the crown of glory as our own, as the conqueror takes the spoil of the city, for which he has successfully fought. The keenness of the conflict will increase our honors, heighten the raptures of our enjoyment, and swell the songs of triumph. The heavenly possessor will applaud our courage and exalt our bliss. The Prince of Life will invest us with immortal honours, and welcome us to the treasures of His throne. We shall dwell in the immediate presence of God, and gaze on the cloudless beauties and uncreated glories of Him whom the angels dimly see. We shall banquet with the Lamb, eat of the hidden manna and drink of the mystic wine of His kingdom. We shall become citizens of the great metropolis of the universe, form associations, interchange conversations and partake of enjoyments with all the glorified intelligences gathered from all parts of the Divine domains. We shall mingle our voices with the morn-

ing stars that sang at the creation of the world, help to swell the raptures of the sons of God, and cast our crowns at the feet of our blessed and adorable Saviour. We shall lay hold of Him not by the trembling hand of faith, but with a firmness that Satan cannot shake, duration impair, or eternity ungrasp. We shall possess celestial wealth; call Heaven's richest stores our own; penetrate those deep mines where the seraph has his choicest treasures, and whence archangels derive all their good, and thence unceasingly enrich our minds. We shall enjoy perfect love. Behold it sparkling in the fountains, flowing in the rivers, smiling in the flowers, blushing in its fruits and giving animation to everything! It will give to the atmosphere a general and delicious fragrance, inflame our devotions, absorb our nature, and impart youth, joy, and immortal beauty. It will be the principal theme of conversation, and embodied in all the songs of the redeemed.

"I heard," said John, "the voice of many angels round the throne, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory and blessing." In the grand everlasting future new scenes will strike us, and increasing

mysteries attract and inspire us; but the light of the eternal day will make them more glorious and transparent. In our present state it often seems to us as if God had His way in the whirlwind and the storm, and His footpaths in the vast deep, but when the veil is uplifted we shall trace with minute attention and exquisite pleasure the economy of divine wisdom, and Heaven's arcana will be open to our view. The seemingly irregular path of life will be made plain, the most perplexing difficulties solved, and the dispensations of divine providence made known. We shall celebrate the incomparable wonders of divine love, contemplate the astonishing compassions of divine goodness, and join the enraptured hosts in "ascribing praise, to Him that sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb forever." With what ecstatic joy shall we listen to the songs of the angels and their celestial accompanists!

This world is full of harmony. We hear it in the autumnal winds as they sigh among the branches of the leafless trees, in the roar of the whirlwind, the rippling of the streamlet, the waves of the ocean as they come mournfully rolling in along the shore, and in the mountain torrent as it leaps from crag to crag, or trickles through the mosses. There is music in the sea tempest as it lashes the troubled waters, and in

the deep diapason tones of the thunder. These voices have been heard in all ages, and will continue till the power that called them forth shall hush them. He who gave these elemental forces their pulsations also gave to the birds their sweet notes of song. Each has its own note and sings in its own way—never getting below or above the pitch. What is there sweeter than the melody of birds, warbling in their upward flight or among the dancing leaves? God has given to man musical faculties of a higher order, creative and progressive. We read of the music of the spheres vocalizing immensity. Who can conceive, or even conjecture the effect produced, when the grand oratorio of creation swept along the star-shores of the universe, rolling like the billows of the ocean through the realms of infinity! If the blast of an archangel's trumpet can upheave the mountains, how the people of those distant worlds must have been thrilled and enraptured as the angelic chorus reached the full majesty of its power! What a glorious sight this celestial choir must have presented! No artist would attempt to throw such a scene upon canvas. In the centre of the universe stood the Morning Stars and the Sons of God, their raiment brighter than the sun; innumerable as the stars, and their voices like the sound of many waters and mighty

thunderings. How long this celebration lasted is not revealed. Another song now employs the lips of the heavenly hosts—that of adoration and redemption. The anticipation of seeing and hearing those glorious musicians often fills us with rapture. What peerless masters of harmony they must be! Each member must be fitted and prepared for the position. John says: "No man could sing the song he heard sung on Mount Zion but those who had been redeemed from the earth and had the Divine mark on his forehead."

Mozart's spirit-stirring "Don Giovanni," and the solemnity of his "Requiem," which do not lose any power by too frequently rolling their divine sounds on the ear; Beethoven's gigantic conceptions, uttering their storm-like harmonies and ravishing strains of beauty; Weber's richness in "Oberon," with its strange, unearthly harmony; Mendelssohn's sweeping majesty and the dying cadences of his "Midsummer Night's Dream;" Bach's immortal strains; Czerny's exquisite "Palestine;" Purcell's "Te Deum;" Handel's stupendous choruses and magnificent Dead March; and Haydn's immortal canzonets, and his creations so full of beauty and loveliness—these do not compare to the chimes of Paradise, seraphic symphonies, angelic harp solos and the harmony of the new song. How could mortal man

compete with such perfect musicians? The musical compositions of earth are often inharmonious and improperly rendered by those who take part in them, but nothing of this kind can ever occur in the "temple of the Most High." In Heaven there is music everywhere. Dream-like melodies float around the saints as they walk the banks of the River of Life, or stand by the living fountains whose waters fall like showers of pearls on the sparkling grasses. From every hill, valley and ambrosial bower rise holy voices, divine in their sublimity. We have often felt, while uniting in the holy praises of God's earthly sanctuary, a strange power moving the heart and so stirring the fountains of the soul to their very depths that we were unable to engage in the service, and the gushing tear could only bespeak what the heart felt. But what hallowed rapture shall we feel, what unspeakable joy shall lay hold of us, when we not only listen to, but take part in, the hallelujahs of the Heaven of heavens; while not only our lips but our hearts are tuned to notes divine! What enjoyment awaits us in that happy land! We have often stood, by faith, within the shining portals of the Holy City, and listened to the songs of the elders and the living ones before the throne. Is such a holy and happy place to

be our home forever? Yes, it is prepared for us, if we only prepare for it; and not for us only, but for all who love their Lord and Master.

"O glorious life of perfect love;
It lifts me up to things above,
It bears on eagle's wings;
It gives my ravished soul a taste,
And makes me for some moments feast
With Jesus, priests and kings."

Voicee come to you through the ages. "Press forward!" Let this be your motto as you advance towards the Celestial Kingdom. Your light afflictions are but for a moment when compared to the eternal joys that await you. You may, while on earth, have to endure many trials and labour hard for the bread that perisheth —lift up your heads, a brighter day is dawning. Even in this world your lot is better than was that of your Master. "He had not where to lay His head." Wait a little longer, and your eternal songs shall abound and every tear be dried. You shall exchange your earthly homes for mansions of glory, and your garments for the spotless robes of Paradise. Your heads, that are now bowed down with sorrow and crowded with anxious thoughts, shall wear a crown of life forever.

You shall, ere long, lay aside your implements of toil, and wave the palm of victory. You shall soon leave the church militant and enter the rest that remains for the people of God. Shout, ye sons of God, "Land's ahead!" The ever-green shore is coming into view. Then let the angry waves roar and the winds lift up their voice, your Heavenly Father is at the helm. Crowd on the canvas, and you shall soon outride the storm and enter the harbor of peace, to put to sea no more. Then you shall have joy unmingled with sorrow, pleasure without pain, riches without poverty, friends without enemies, day without night, and be crowned with eternal happiness. Let trials come, as come they will, they are only working out for you a far more exceeding and eternal height of glory. If you should reach your heavenly home before I do, you may look out for me, as I'm coming too.

Walks in Paradise



THE REUNION OF FRIENDS IN PARADISE.

"I look to imagine again, through the beautiful mask of their perfection,

The dear familiar faces I have somewhere loved on earth :
I long to talk with grateful tongue of storms and perils past,
And praise the mighty Pilot that hath steered us through the rapids."

"All is not over with earth's broken tie,
Where, where should sister love if not on high?"

THE teaching of the Bible on this subject is looked upon by many as more inferential than direct. Most of the heathen philosophers and poets believed in the doctrine of Heavenly Recognition. Homer, the great Grecian poet, who lived nine hundred years before Christ—

"The blind old man of Scio's rocky isle,"
who sang so sweetly in classic song—taught that

friends would meet, know, and love each other in Heaven, as they did on earth. The thought of meeting the great and the good on earth in the future life shed a soul-cheering light on the dying moments of Socrates. Cicero, the great Roman orator, says: "For my own part, I feel transported with the most ardent impatience to join the society of my two departed friends, your illustrious fathers, whose character I greatly respected, and whose persons I sincerely loved." Among modern pagans this precious and consoling belief is still held and cherished.

Heavenly recognition may be fairly deduced from the Holy Scriptures. The following passages of the Word of God may be cited in support of the position: In the first book of Samuel, twenty-eighth chapter, we read: "Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? For thou art Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form is he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he is covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it

was Samuel." It does not affect the question here by whose agency the spirit of Samuel was raised. It is evident that both the woman and Saul recognized the prophet, and the prophet recognized Saul.

Perhaps the fact may admit the argument, that if a departed spirit and a living man could be mutually recognized, then it was even more probable, if both individuals had departed, that is, both were occupying the same sphere and conditions of existence, they could equally recognize each other. David proposes an express comfort to himself from such an expectation, when bereaved of his child : "And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again?" When the child is dead he is not merely comforted, but comparatively cheerful, under the impression, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." The two parts that constitute the antithesis must be mutually related, or they would fail of the consolation, and would have no definite lesson for us. If the child had returned to David he would, of course, have recognized, received and loved him on earth; but as instead of this David is to go to the child, it would seem to

infer that he comforted himself with the assurance of the same recognition and repossession of the departed in another world. The happy thought of meeting his child again sustained the Royal Psalmist in his severe affliction. If he had said, "He shall not return to life with me, but I shall go to death with him," his resignation would have been inconsistent. Where would be the special consolation in the father's being lost to the child, as the child had been lost to the father, if death were the final extinction of the powers of recognition and recovery each of the other? Clearly the words are susceptible of no reasonable interpretation which does not involve the doctrine contended for. If it be answered, that the proof of such an impression being in the mind of David, is not conclusive upon the doctrine in question, I would humbly submit, that the prevalent impressions of inspired men, where they have recorded them in scripture, are to be received as Divine truth, upon the same authority as we receive their views of other less speculative doctrines.

"My little one, my fair one, thou canst not come to me,
But nearer draws the number'd hose when I shall go to thee;
And thou, perchance, with rough smile, and golden harp in
—,

May'st come the first to welcome me, to our Emanuelli land."

Dr. Nevins in his "Practical Thoughts" says: "True, death separates, but it unites also. It takes us, I know, from those we love, but it takes us to as many we love." The wife of the Rev. John Evans asked her husband: "Do you think we shall know each other in Heaven?" He replied: "To be sure we shall; do you think we shall be less intelligent there than we are here?" In our heavenly intercourse we may suppose some sudden surprises may occur, as they do here, where one shall at once recognise his friends and be not at once be recognised by them. Kindred may meet, as the sons of Jacob met Joseph in Egypt, and while regarding each other as strangers, a sudden joyful melting of hearts may be produced by some such expression as "I am Joseph your brother." There may be also meetings in which gradual recognition will take place, like that of the two disciples who fell in with Christ on His way to Emmaus. That this world is remembered in the world to come is evident from the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Here our Saviour accommodates His language to the common notions of the Jews, who were taught by the Rabbinical writers to believe that the gates of Paradise were over against the gates of Hell, separated by an impassable gulf, yet within eye range and hearing

of each other. As soon as the rich man saw Lazarus he recognized him and called him by name, and asked Abraham to have mercy on him and send Lazarus, that he might dip the tip of his finger in water to cool his tongue, etc. In reply, Abraham said: "Son, remember that thou in thy life time had good things, and Lazarus evil." We are told that he remembered his father's house, and his five brethren, which indicates that we shall carry the faculty of memory with us into the other world. "We shall know even as we are known."

The learned Rev. Chas. Drelincourt says: "I may affirm for an infallible truth that the glory of Heaven, as well as grace, shall bring nature to perfection, but shall not destroy it. It shall add to the other excellencies, but it shall not abolish any of the faculties, but it shall beautify and enrich them with new ornaments. Consequently, it shall not take away our memory, which is one of the rarest gifts and abilities of the reasonable soul." The Rev. Richard Baxter, author of the "Saints' Everlasting Rest," remarks: "I must confess as the experience of my own soul, that the expectation of loving my friends in Heaven principally kindles my love for them on earth. If I thought that I should never know them after

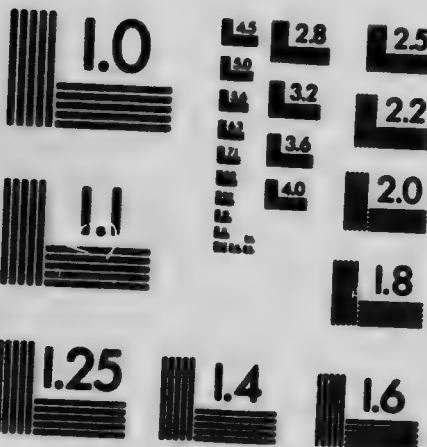
this life is ended, I should of reason number them with temporal things and love them as such. But I now delight to converse with my pious friends in a firm persuasion that I shall converse with them forever, and I take comfort in those of them that are dead or absent, as believing I shall shortly meet them in Heaven and love them with heavenly love, that shall then be perfected."

It is difficult to conceive how memory can exist in the eternal world without leading to recognition. Can we suppose Abraham will not know Isaac; Jacob, Rebecca; Moses, Aaron; Elijah, Elias, and that the disciples shall pass each other in the streets of the Holy City and not know each other? That Lazarus and his sisters Martha and Mary will meet as strangers? As the saints in Heaven minister to the saints on earth, is it too much to suppose that they watch the physical changes which take place in their friends from childhood to manhood as to make recognition an easy matter? Prof. Tyndall beautifully remarks, "There is an image behind all shapes," and it may be that there is a mental image behind the physical which retains its identity, notwithstanding the changes which take place in the outward man by accident and the weight of years. Our intellectual faculties will be more



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powerful and acute than they are here. There will be nothing to prevent their expansion or development. Peter knew Moses and Elijah when they appeared to Christ and His disciples on the Mount of the Transfiguration, though he had never seen them in the flesh. How did he know the celestial strangers? We do not read that they made known to him their names, or that the great Hebrew lawgiver and Elijah were introduced to him by Jesus. No doubt he recognized who they were by a direct revelation from God, like that by which the prophets were endowed. It may be that similar manifestations may be imparted to the saints in Heaven. Why did the patriarchs desire to be buried in the sepulchre of their fathers? What means this fellowship of the dead? They believed that their spirit were in each other's society above, which led them to desire that their bodies, under the promise of a blessed resurrection, should sleep the short intervening night together till the dawn of the eternal day. Has not the same feeling pervaded every age? Amid the loneliness which steals over the spirit at the approach of death, comes also the desire to rest with our kindred, as touchingly expressed by Jacob: "I will lie with my fathers, bury me in their burying place." There is a beautiful instance of this kind

related by Mrs. Sigourney of a little girl who expressed a desire that she might lie with her mother, of which she would not be denied. She was asked in what place they should bury her, whether in the shady dell where the violets bloom, or in the old churchyard among the white monuments. But all ideas of place faded before the one absorbing idea, "Bury me by your side, mother."

"One only wish she uttered,
While life was ebbing fast,
Sleep by my side, dear mother,
And rise with me at last."

Christ said to His disciples, "I go to prepare a *place* for you." And shall Christ's disciples, as a family, dwell together in the place which He hath prepared for them and not know each other? Such an idea is an insult to the intelligence of our race. Shall not Paul recognize his Thessalonian converts, of whom he says, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy." At that great gathering, when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, is it possible that Paul and his converts shall meet and not know each other? Is this "crown," for whom he suffered and toiled to win, to be unrecognized?

Nay, verily. Like a constellation of stars they shall surround him, and he shall recognize the friendly faces as they stand in the presence of the great Judge. As the pastor recognizes the members of his former charges on earth, so shall he recognize them when they meet in the great assembly. Men of all creeds, and in all ages, have expressed their belief in heavenly recognition, and surely their testimony ought to have our most devout and careful consideration. Martin Luther, the evening before he died, expressed his opinion that we should know father, mother, and one another on sight. Casper Olevianus, when his son had been summoned to see him before he should die, sent to him the message that he need not hurry, that they should see one another in eternal life. Archdeacon Paley says, "That the saints in the future life will meet and be known again to one another, for how without knowing again his converts in their new and glorious state, could St. Paul desire, or expect to present them at the last day?"

Dr. John Dick says, "It has been asked whether in the blessed abode the saints will know one another. One would think that the question was unnecessary, as the answer naturally presents itself to every man's mind, and it could only have occurred to some

dreaming theologian, who in his airy speculations has soared far beyond the sphere of reason and common sense. Who can doubt whether the saints will know one another, what reason can be given why they should not? Would it be any part of their perfection to have all their former ideas obliterated and to meet as strangers in the other world? What would be gained by this ignorance? No man can tell; but we can tell what would be lost by it. How could those whom we had been the instrument of converting and building up in the holy faith be to the minister of the Gospel a 'crown of rejoicing' in the day of the Lord, if he did not recognize them when standing by his side?" Bishop Hall speaks very confidently on this subject: "Thou hast lost thy friend, say rather thou hast parted with him. That is properly lost which is past all recovery, which we are out of hope to see any more. It is not so with this friend thou mournest for; he is gone a little before thee. Thou art following him. You two shall meet in your 'Father's house,' and enjoy each other more happily than you could have done here below." The holy Fenelon, who lived "quite on the verge of heaven," says, "He has placed the friends whom He has taken from us in safety, to restore them to us in eternity."

The Rev. Morley Funshon also beautifully expresses himself on this subject: "It is a conscious and social world into which we are rapidly passing. Heaven is not a solitude; it is a peopled 'land,' a land in which there are no strangers, no homeless, no poor; where one does not pass each other without greeting; where no one is envious of another's superior minstrelsy, or another's more brilliant crown. When God said in the ancient Eden, 'It is not good for man to be alone,' there was a deeper signification in the words than could be exhausted or explained by the family tie. It was the declaration of an essential want, which the Creator, in His highest wisdom, has impressed upon the noblest of His works. That is not life—you don't call that life, where the hermit, in moorland glade drags out a solitary existence? Or when the captive, in some cell or bondage, frets and pines unseen? The life of solitude about which men boast themselves, is not a life of solitude at all. Such men do not understand solitude. Life, all kinds of life, tend to companionship, and rejoice in it, from the fecund larvae and the buzzing insect cloud, up to the kingly lion and kinglier man. It is a social state to which we are introduced, as well as a state of consciousness. Not only, therefore, does the Saviour pray for His

disciples, "Father, I will that those whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory;" but those who are in that heavenly recompence are said to have come "to the general assembly and Church of the First-born written in Heaven." Aye, and better than that, and dearer to some of us, "to the spirits of just men made perfect," this is an ancient representation of a social state, in which all affections are pure, in which there is conscious recognition of the friends from whom we have been some time parted, but with whom we are to abide in perpetual reunion; and with a home without a discord, a home without an illness, a home without a grave. And this question of the recognition of friends in Heaven, and special and intimate reunion with them, Scripture and reason enable us to infer with almost absolute certainty. It is implied in the fact that the resurrection is a resurrection of individuals, that it is this mortal that shall put on immortality. It is implied in the fact that Heaven is a vast and happy society; and it is implied in the fact that there is no unclothing of the nature that we possess, only the clothing upon it of the garments of a brighter and more glorious immortality. Take comfort then, those of you in whose history the dearest charities of life

have been severed by the rude hand of death—those whom you have thought about as lost, are not lost, except to present sight. Perhaps even now they are angel-watchers, screened by a kindly Providence from everything about you that would give them pain; but if you and they are alike in Jesus, and remain faithful to the end, doubt not that you shall know them again. It were strange, don't you think, if, amid the multitudes of the heavenly hosts, the multitudes of the earth's ransomed ones that we are to see in Heaven, we should see all but those we most fondly and fervently long to see? Strange if, in some of our walks along, we never happened to light upon them! Strange if we did not hear some heaven-song learned on earth, trilled by some clear ringing voice that we have often heard before! Oh, depend upon it, in a realm of perfect happiness, this element of happiness will not be absent—to know and love again those we have known and loved below. And although in Heaven there may be a commonwealth—although in Heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage—yet dearer than all others there will be the wife to the husband, and the husband to the wife, and the friend to the friend, who have toiled and suffered on earth together. Oh, what heart is not thrilled by the glorious prospect!

Rev. Dr. J. Cummings, like some bird of Paradise out amid the billows of a troubled life, warbles out the following cheering melody: "I look upon it as one of the brightest hopes of Christianity, that those we loved on earth, from whose lips dropped lessons of wisdom—whose footprints upon the sands of time shall shine with imperishable excellency—we shall meet and know and recognize again. There is not a mother that has lost a babe that will not meet her babe, and recognize it again, in that pure and beautiful and holy light which never shall be shaded."

Very beautifully does Longfellow sing on this subject:—

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there!
There is no fireside, howso'er defended,
But has one vacant chair!

"The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
The heart of Rachel, for her children crying,
Will not be comforted!

"Let us be patient! These severe afflictions
Not from the ground arise,
But oftentimes celestial benedictions
Assume this dark disguise.

"We see but dimly through the mist and vapours,
Amid those earthly damps,
What seem to us but sad, funeral tapers
May be heaven's distant lamps.

"There is no Death! What seems so is transition;
This life of mortal breath
Is but a suburb of the life Elysian,
Whose portal we call Death."

This shall be realized in all its blessedness and comfort then. I think it would take away half the charm of the future if a father, a brother, a sister, a babe be near you, and yet you be insensible to their presence, or ignorant of the familiar and once beloved face. The promised future is not a series of cold, insulated cells, but our Father's house. It is amid the warmth of His fireside that we shall gather; it is under that roof-tree, that never shall be broken, that we shall meet; and as sure as we gather in our Father's house shall I recognise and know all my brothers and my sisters in Christ, when we sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of our Father. Heaven is not a solitary place, where each is isolated from the other in loneliness. All the imagery employed denotes that our future state is a social condition; it is a city, it is a country, it is the general assembly of

the First-born. Christianity does not destroy our social feelings, it consecrates them. Jesus, who had so many souls to save, had a friend in Lazarus, and intimate friends in Martha and Mary. And these friendships which have been reciprocated below will not be destroyed, but purified and consecrated forever. The future is the scene of perfect knowledge. If I am in that shining group, shall I be there and not know my next neighbour? Shall I be in Heaven and not know him that stands beside me? Will Heaven be a place where all those thrilling and beautiful recollections have perished forever in the bosom of the saved? Has the wave of oblivion washed out every trace that was there? No, no; but memory, and the heart more than memory, will not consent to let its imagery fade out till the grand originals appear. The light of truth shall fill every mind, and a sea of love shall overflow with its spring-tide every heart. The glass shall be broken, the veil shall be rent; Heaven is a home; its inhabitants are brothers and sisters. "It is a day without a night, a sky without a cloud, and a sun without a setting."

We might go on multiplying these testimonials, as the Church in all ages has given no uncertain sound on this great doctrine. The friends we parted with at

the brink of the river we shall meet again, and be united to them. There is a singular thought in Southey's Ode on the portrait of Bishop Heber. He suggests that many of Heber's admirers

" Will gaze
Upon his effigy
With reverential love,
Till they shall grow familiar with its lines,
And know him when they see his face in Heaven."

Why may there not be truth in this beautiful thought? It is forcibly illustrated in the following incident: A lovely little girl lost her mother at an age too early to fix the loved features on her remembrance. As her young heart unfolded it seemed to turn instinctively heavenward. This loving child was the idol of the bereaved family; but she faded early away. She would lie upon the lap of a friend and would say, "Now tell me about mamma!" And when the oft-repeated tale had been told, she would ask to be taken into the parlour to see the portrait of her mamma. The request was never refused, and she would lie for hours gazing on that loving face. But

Pale and wan she grew and weakly,
Bearing all her pains so meekly,
That to them she still grew dearer
As the trial-hour grew nearer.

As she was sinking into the arms of death, "Do you know me, darling," asked a voice that was to her the dearest; but it awoke no answer. All at once a brightness stole over her countenance, her eyes opened, her lips parted, and she threw up her arms as if in the act of embracing some one, and exclaimed with transport, "*Mother!*" and passed with that breath into Heaven. A distinguished divine said, who stood by that bed of joyous death, "If I had never believed in the ministrations of departed ones before, I could not doubt it now. We shall not only see our departed friends again, but know them."

Soon we shall know it all. A day may unfold it. It will burst upon us like a revelation when the bitterness of death is past. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the whole scene will be changed. While the weeping friends are yet caressing the still warm clay, the loving watches at the gates of Paradise will be lavishing their kisses of welcome. Not as strangers approaching some lonely shore shall we depart, but as loved and longed-for pilgrims, who return to open arms and welcoming hearts. I long to see Jesus and the angels who watched over me, and all the great and good whose virtues have enriched the ages, but as I

near the eternal shore my look-out will be for familiar faces who will be more to me than all the jewelled hosts that encircle the eternal throne. Heaven will recognise their right; nor will it be for a day.

CONCLUSION.

I HAVE taken you on the wings of thought to the Heavenly Rest, and tried, but inadequately I fear, to describe its felicity. As you have looked upon its glories and listened to its rapturous songs, no doubt you have felt a desire to make it your home. If you have travelled much in this world, before starting on your journey you have gathered all the information you could of the country to which you were going, and the route. There is a possibility in this world of not making proper connections, or by some unforeseen circumstance never reaching the land you desired to visit. But the way to the heavenly Paradise is so plain that a wayfaring man, even a fool in human knowledge, need not err therein. Christ says, "I am the way." This way is said to be narrow. At the entrance of which stands what is termed the "*strait gate*," or *repentance*, through which all must pass before they can reach the "*New and Living Way*." Near this gate also stands the cross of Christ, an

earnest look at which will relieve you of the burden of your sins, as the Saviour has said, "Look unto Me, and be ye saved." Having fully entered upon the way of life, you will find it to be a way of pleasantness, and its paths those of peace. As you advance it will grow brighter and the prospect more cheering. If you are willing to be led by the Holy Spirit, you shall tread on High Places, called the "Way of Holiness." "The unclean do not pass over it, no lion nor ravenous beast is found there, the redeemed only walk there." It is by this way that the ransomed of the Lord return to Zion, with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads." From these altitudes you catch a glimpse of the Good Land, and feel the balmy breezes as they are wafted from the mountains of perpetual bliss. If you wish to make Heaven your home you must go by the way of the Cross, as it is the only way leading thereto. You may find the road rough at times, and difficulties, like mountains, may rise before you, but if you lean hard upon the promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee," you shall overcome every trial, and at last there shall be administered unto you an abundant entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Adieu, my dear reader, till we meet in the Paradise above!

